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ABSTRACT

A leader's lack of followers is due to his lack of leadership, not the irresponsibility of his followers. Effective leadership can be defined as ability to foster a spirit of cooperation among a mass of people and to channel the collective efforts of these people toward a defined goal or objective. Some of the considerations involved in the process of fostering this spirit of cooperation are leadership style, plan and objective development, organizational type, competency development in workers, leadership qualities, worker motivation, and use of power. (DCS)

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Introduction

In educational institutions, as in other organizations, management faces the task of providing leadership for a great variety of personnel having different level of ability, commitment and motivation. Given this fact, it would be easy to attribute our lack of progress to the fact that followers are not accepting their responsibilities. The common expression, "I am a leader...the idiots won't follow" depicts the exasperation one may feel when his or her leadership is not producing the desired results. However, the premise of this presentation is that the true test of leadership is that of whether anyone is following.

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Effective leadership is getting things done through people. It is easy to determine whether you are leading; simply look behind you and see if anyone is following you. If there is not, you may be taking an impressive walk by yourself, but you are not leading.

The most essential ingredient in the formula for having an effective organization is positive human interaction. The success of leaders is equal to their ability to promote and foster a spirit of cooperation among a mass of people and to channel the collective efforts of these people toward a defined goal or objective. This discussion will focus on some of the essential considerations involved in the process of fostering this spirit of cooperation through the necessary positive interaction.

While there is little need for delineation among the inherent attributes of good leadership, they are generally considered to be in three categories. leadership skills, motivational skills and the development of skills among employees. These categories are so interdependent that it is unlikely that a leader can be effective without attending to each of the three.

The real test of leadership is in how it is carried out and what is accomplished as a result of it. A few years ago, a prevailing popular opinion was that the harder and tougher leaders were better respected and therefore more effective in managing people. Recently, the trend seems to be toward judging leaders on the basis of what is produced as a result of their leadership. Their leadership styles are judged to be good only if they consistently produce desirable results. It is therefore imperative

that each would-be leader select a style which they can comfortably employ.

Leadership Styles

There are many leadership styles from which leaders may choose. The usefulness of one style as opposed to another depends upon several factors. These include the situation in which the particular style of leadership is to be employed and the ability of individual leaders to work comfortably through the use of a specific style. Periodically, leaders will use techniques characteristic of each of the various styles. In this discussion, three specific styles of leadership will be described and contrasted.

One style is <u>leadership by coercion</u>. The underlying principle of this style is that of using fear of punishment as a stimulus. The leader's role is to tell people what they should do and to punish them if they fail to do it. Punishment may take many forms, ranging from public criticism to taking away certain tangible incentives.

While there are times when leadership by coercion appears to work, it does have at least one uncompromising weakness in that the followers tend to lack commitment to the assigned tasks. In addition, they tend not to identify with responsibility for the success or failure of the organization. Many times followers actually sabotage the efforts of the organization, both inadvertently and deliberately in retaliation for acts of the leader.

A second style of leadership is that of <u>authoritarianism</u>. This style is characterized by the leader's belief that by the

authority vested in the position held, orders should be given and obeyed. Enforcement of these orders comes in many forms such as reinforcement from peers, traditional behavior, the organizational structure and through the other forces at the disposal of the leader.

This leadership style has at least two major weaknesses. First, it presupposes that only the leader has any ideas worthy of consideration by the group. It assumes that there must be a separation between idea formation and program implementation. Secondly, it fails to recognize that people work most diligently to carry out a concept, plan, or idea which they help to create. It is difficult to get commitment to an idea which is imposed upon a group, even if it is a good, workable idea. On the other hand, ideas flow up from a group only if the leader is responsive to ideas coming from within the ranks.

A third major style of leadership is the consultative style. The basic premise of this style is that people can and would prefer to be reasoned with. It advocates that employees who are involved in the making of a decision are more likely to be committed to its success than are those who follow without question.

The leaders who employ this style must have high expectations of the members of the organization. They must accept the premise that most of the people in the group would like to have and are willing to work toward the creation of the same high quality of organization that the leader wants. Furthermore, the leader must believe that most of these people feel that they are capable of making a greater contribution to the welfare of the organization

that they have been given an opportunity to make. The role of the leader then includes the tasks of providing the incentive for growth, the opportunity to grow, and the reward for achievement. This leader will channel the course and direction of the organization but in a much less conspicious manner than would be true of any other style.

Setting and Achieving Objectives

It has been repeatedly demonstrated that it is difficult to get people to work harder. The better use of a leader's time is to try to help people to work smarter by using more effective techniques. This can be done by developing plans for meeting specific objectives which make maximum use of the efforts of the workers.

Any plan has a better chance of producing action if it has certain qualities. One of these is realism; that is, the plan must show promise that it can be achieved. It must be understandable; each person must be able to relate to the general, broad, and long-range objectives of the organization. Yet each employee must know what specific tasks will be performed by each individual and how those tasks relate to the major objective. The plan must have measurable outcomes, at least to the extent that people will know when they shall have reached the goals toward which they have worked and for which they are being held accountable.

Kinds of Organizations

It would be an oversimplification to suggest that a certain

leadership style offers a greater potential for success than does another style. This depends to some degree on the kind of organization, the people involved and results desired.

One kind of organization is that which is run by a single owner and operates under the "golden rule" philosophy - "since I have the gold, I make the rules." While this may work for some small businesses, most often this organization suffers from lack of commitment from its workers.

Another organizational type is the failure avoidance organization. It operates on the premise that it must not fail at its task. It assumes that the lack of failure is synonymous with success. It tends to confuse busyness with achievement and fatigue with accomplishment. It may actually discourage commitment by failing to realize that many people go through life without commitment because without it, there is no such thing as failure.

Still another kind of organizational structure is the maintenance type organization. This structure stresses "doing things better." It rewards dependable, predictable behavior, and discourages innovation. It fails to recognize that it may be encouraging the maintenance and improvement of methods which should not be used at all.

A type of organization which is growing in popularity is the objective and results type. It operates under the belief that it is bound by its objectives and is accountable for well defined results. Its major weakness lies in the tendency to do only that which it can measure and which assures success. This process can discourage the flow of new ideas and prevents growth within the

organization.

Another type organization is the change oriented organization. It is constantly seeking ways to improve itself. Its basic philosophy is that the worst enemy of "the best" is "the good enough." However, a weakness which it must be careful to avoid is the possibility of promoting change for the sake of change. It must constantly ask itself what will be different and better because of the change it advocates.

Developing Competency in People

The ideal organization is one in which all members feel the same level of commitment to the success of the organization that the leader feels. It is fairly easy to provide leadership for highly motivated people, provided the leader is competent. This suggests that to insure success, leaders need only to surround themselves with competent, committed people.

There are two techniques for getting good, competent people into an organization. One way is to recruit and hire only the best. This way poses some definite problems for the typical organization because the best possible people may not choose to work for that particular organization. Highly competent people can generally work wherever they choose, and they nornally seek the most attractive organizations in which to work.

The second and more practical way to get competent people to work within an organization is to recruit the most competent people available to that organization. Appraise them of the philosophy, the strengths, and weaknesses of the organization prior to their being hired. Bring to the attention of prospect-

ive employees fixed variables including location of the organization, financial inducements, and opportunities for advancement. If this is done, individuals who are hired by the organization should be prepared to commit themselves to fulfilling their own potential. The leadership function then becomes one of helping employees define their potential, establish personal goals and devise a plan of action for reaching these goals. Afforded good leadership, employees experience a process of growth and self-development.

After this process is completed, the leader is able to focus on three other factors: (1) the extent to which employees are familiar with the task to be performed; (2) the degree to which employees are skillful at performing the tasks and the degree to which it is necessary to help them develop additional skills; and (3) techniques for helping new employees develop necessary skills. Leaders must constantly evaluate the skills, knowledge, habits, and attitudes of employees. It is imperative that leaders work to maintain a compatible balance between the attitudes and skills which employees possess and those which they need in order to do the job well. Leaders must be readily available to provide guidance, incentive and rewards.

Qualities of Inspired Leadership

An inspired leader makes good things happen which would otherwise not have happened. In any organization some progress is inevitable. The usual assumption made is that this progress shows evidence that good leadership is at work. In truth, however, much of the progress made is incidental and sometimes may

even be made in spite of the leadership. It is often beneficial for leaders to ask themselves to what extent they are responsible for the improvement which the organization may have experienced.

Some leaders possess a variety of talents which they use to project themselves into the leadership role. Logically, it can be assumed that the more talented the individual, the better they will be able to lead. Strangely enough, there is no known correlation between having talent and becoming a successful leader. In fact, there is nothing more prevalent in the world of work than exceptionally talented people who are working under the direction of average or less than average people in terms of ability.

There does appear to be a high correlation between success as a leader and the ability to communicate one's conviction to others. Leaders are usually as successful as they are able to get acceptance at the "gut" level to what they are saying. People tend to be persuaded more by the depth of an individual's convictions than by the height of their logic.

Good leaders have a mission. They can describe what the organization is trying to do under their leadership and how tasks are to be accomplished. These leaders have emotional stability to the extent that job requirements are not in conflict with their personal values. Effective leaders exercise intellectual maturity to the degree that they recognize that having the respect of their employees is more vital than being popular. Good leaders consult with those who must perform the tasks in order to help them believe in themselves. Good leaders do not treat all

employees alike or as they themselves would like to be treated, but treat employees according to their individual needs.

Motivation Toward Self-Direction

The ideal personnel relationship is one in which the employee functions with maximum effectiveness with the least direction from the employer. If the leader has clearly defined the job to be done and spelled out the parameters of freedom to do the job, each employee can function with the highest degree of responsible autonomy. All organizations will not have the same specific constraints on employees. There are, however, some boundaries which are so common to the typical organization that it can be generalized that employees must learn to work within them if the organization is to prosper.

One such constraint is budget. If the members of an organization understand clearly the source of revenue, the amount of revenue, and the obligations against the revenue of an organization, they are more prone to work within budget constraints. Employees need to be involved in decisions about spending and obligating funds and be able to see fairness and equity in the disbursement of funds. They should be involved in budget making, budget projections for future planning and in priority setting. It would also be helpful for employees to develop budgets for programs which they believe should be funded and present a rationale to defend their point of view. Whatever the method used, the more employee participation in the process, the more commitment to responsible spending is likely to exist among the employees.

It would be beneficial to make employees aware of constraints relative to organizational policy. These constraints consists of the rules that regulate employee functions and cover such considerations as working hours, salary stipulations, leave time, vacation provisions, organizational hierarchy and employee benefits. Policies should be explained as clearly as possible and a reasonable opportunity to question any unclear policy should be provided.

The organization's philosophy is another common constraint. It sets the standards for all employees. Employees should be involved in establishing this philosophy so that it is in keeping with their own values. New employees should be instructed in the organization's philosophy, how it has developed and how it responds to responsible criticism.

Employees must also understand the authoritative structure of the organization. There are three basic elements of authority which are necessary to promulgate responsibility. At the primary level, people must have the freedom to perform certain acts on their own volition. At the second level, people should act only after having consulted with someone else and, at the third level an individual may act only after having been given permission. One key to good personnel relations lies in giving employees the opportunity to learn which things fall in each category, with whom they must consult, and from whom they must obtain permission.

After establishing and defining the limits of autonomy which employees have, leaders must encourage employees to exercise

self-direction within these limits. It is essential that evaluation of results through a formal structure become standard procedure and that any directions for improvement come as a result of knowledge gained through the evaluative process. When these tasks are performed with commitment, the leadership function becomes more a helping function than simply one of direction and enforcement. The result is likely to be a more success oriented organization.

The Use of Power

Power is an essential element of leadership and the extent to which leaders are skilled in its use is one of the greatest determiners of their effectiveness. Power is the ability to control a desired resource and is made up of two components: authority and influence. Authority is the right to control a resource. This right may be delegated to an individual by law, policy, or position on the organizational chart. Influence, however, is the acquired ability to manage a resource. Power is insured by having both authority and influence over a resource which is in demand. It is important to note that if there is no demand for the resource, individuals have no power even if they control that resource.

Power takes many forms, among which are knowledge, emotional control and charisma. Some leaders withhold knowledge as a means of controlling their employees. Others control people by manipulating the emotions through use of fear, anxiety, love, uncertainty or suspense. Still others rely upon their charm and charisma to cause people to want to please them.

There is the possibility that even the best of leaders may be guilty at one time or another of resorting to the unscrupulous use of power in one or more of the forms discussed previously.

Each of these approaches has inherent weaknesses of which the good leader must be cautious. Control by withholding information results in an unenlightened following. This will ultimately be reflected in the diminishing quality of the work performed. Control by emotional manipulation is likely to produce an irrational following, incapable of separating reality from fantasy. It tends to produce cliques and encourage the rationale that "friends" are people who have the same enemies. This destroys unity in an organization. Control by charisma tends to give leaders an unrealistic appraisal of their own strengths and weaknesses and an inflated sense of self-worth. This can act as a deterrent to personal growth and development.

While it is useful for individuals to know their strengths and weaknesses, it is rarely necessary for them to use all the power at their disposal. The most effective power is that which people know exists but rarely ever see exercised.

Summary and Conclusions

Good leaders must know the difference between efficiency and effectiveness. The leadership process may be efficient but if it does not yield the desired results, it is ineffective.

Good leaders ask themselves the following questions:

1. How many suggestions for improvement have I listened to recently?
2. How many of these suggestions have I implemented?

3. Am I doing things better at the expense of doing better things?
4. How much do personnel know about the job to be done?
5. How much skill do they have?
6. What results am I rewarding?
7. How easy is it for me to listen to a point of view which I do not like?
8. Under my leadership, are the people in the organization experiencing success?

Good leaders must constantly remind themselves:

1. That nobody likes to be led all the time.
2. To reward only significant inputs.
3. That the ultimate punishment to human beings is to take all meaning away from their day-to-day work.
4. That people must have the <u>experience</u> of achieving, not just the <u>feeling</u> of achieving.
5. That effectiveness is a more important factor than is efficiency.
6. That people tend to rally around individuals who seem to know where they are going.

In conclusion, a workable format for the evaluation of one's own effectiveness as a leader may be seen in the following quote from the Chinese philosopher, Lao-Tzu:

Of the best leaders
   The people only know they exist;
The next best they love and praise;
   The next they fear;
And the next they revile.

When they do not command the people's faith
   Some will lose faith in them
And they may resort to recriminations.

But of the best, when their task is accomplished,
   Their work done,
The people will remark,
   "WE HAVE DONE IT OURSELVES!"